

A METHOD FOR CARRYING OUT SECURE DIGITAL SIGNATURE
AND A SYSTEM THEREFOR

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to the field of authentication. More particularly, the invention relates to a method and system for electronic authentication of data packet(s) by carrying out secure signing of a person on the data packet(s) using unique biometric indicia.

Background of the Invention

In order to facilitate the reading of the description to follow, a number of terms employed in the art are defined below:

- Encryption: The process of turning readable data into cipher data.
- Decryption: The process of transforming cipher data into readable data.
- Cryptography: The science of transforming readable data into cipher data and back again.
- Digital signature: The electronic equivalent of traditional handwritten signatures, usually an encrypted data entity upon which the source of the signature may be identified.
- Key: A single numeric or alphanumeric value that is a part of an algorithm for encryption of data.

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- ## Digital Signatures

Digital signatures are the electronic equivalent of traditional handwritten signatures. However, unlike handwritten signature, a digital signature is hard to forge. It is a computed digest of the text that is encrypted and sent with the text message. The recipient decrypts the signature and recomputes the digest from the received text. If the digest matches, the

- 3 -

message is authenticated and proved intact from the sender. However, it cannot disclose what has been changed or how much has been changed in the document.

Digital signatures are especially important for electronic commerce and are a key component of most authentication schemes. To be effective, digital signatures must be unforgeable. There are a number of different encryption techniques to guarantee this level of security. Digital signatures do not provide privacy, but can be easily accomplished with an extra encryption step. Digital signatures and encryption can be used to provide authenticity, confidentiality, integrity, and non-repudiation.

Digital signatures rely on two cryptographic algorithms: public key (asymmetric) cryptography and hash functions.

Public/Private Key Cryptography

Two uniquely related keys are created - a Public key and a Private Key. Actually, they comprise very large numbers. What is encrypted with one key can only be decrypted with the other. One can freely distribute a Public key to recipients, but the Private key is retained by that individual alone.

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If anyone encrypts a message with a Public key and sends it to the owner of the Private key, he can be confident that only the owner of the private key will be able to read that message.

Hash function is another tool used in digital signature techniques. A one-way hash function, also known as a message digest, fingerprint or compression function, is a mathematical function which takes a variable-length input string and converts it into a fixed-length binary sequence. Furthermore, a one-way hash function is designed in such a way that it is hard to reverse the process, that is, to find a string that hashes to a given value (hence the name one-way). A good hash function also makes it difficult to locate two strings producing the same hash value. Even a slight change in an input string should cause the hash value to change drastically. If 1 bit is flipped in the input string, at least half of the bits in the hash value will flip as a result.

Digital signatures with public-key cryptography and one-way hash functions

Figure 1 schematically illustrates the steps for creating and verifying a digital signature:

1. Sender runs the document(s) through a hash function.
2. The hash function produces a message digest, a fingerprint of the message.

- To keep objects safe and secure, the following are necessary:**

- Authentication - assurance of identity.
- Authorization - that the party is sanctioned for a particular function.
- Privacy - confidentiality.
- Data integrity - proof that the object has not been altered.
- Non-repudiation - protection against denial of origin of a communication or data.

When all of these requirements are met, the Internet can be used with confidence for all business communication. In order for electronic commerce to take off, a trusted environment and secure transactions are necessary. Consumers and business people alike must be confident that their transactions will not be intercepted or modified. The computer security community has spent more than 10 years developing digital signatures, which are being touted as the cornerstone technology for electronic commerce.

In order to estimate the security level of a method, a method should be tested by its fragility. In the above-mentioned method, there are two phases of security:

- The key; and
- The hash function.

In order to forge a digital signature, a "hacker" must know how the hash function operates, and the private key of the user. Moreover, an encrypted file which contains a transaction, such as purchase, may be resent over and over by a malicious "hacker", and according to the method described above, the recipient will be in complete ignorance of such malicious tampering.

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At the core of any biometric system lies a method of establishing that the mathematical equivalent of a person's physical or behavioral characteristics (i.e. template) is already referenced by the system. By comparing the template of a sample with the stored reference, said user may be authenticated or verified. While **identification** refers to comparing a single template against a database of templates, **verification** refers to approving an individual's claimed identity.

First, the biometric must be based upon a distinguishable trait. For example, for nearly a century, law enforcement has used fingerprints to identify people. There is a great deal of scientific data supporting the idea that "no two fingerprints are alike." Newer methods, even those with a great deal of scientific support, such as DNA-based genetic matching, sometimes do not hold up in court. Another key aspect is how *user-friendly* is the system. Most people find it acceptable to have their pictures taken by video cameras or to speak into a microphone. In the United States, using a fingerprint sensor does not seem to be much of a problem. In some other countries, however, there is strong cultural opposition to touching something that has been touched by many other people.

Adding a biometric sample to a digital signature improves security.

However, it is not adequate since the presence of a biometric sample by

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a method and system for carrying out secure signing of a person on the data packet(s), which provides higher security level.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a method and system for carrying out secure signing of a person on the data packet(s), which provides improved authentication that the person signed the data packet(s) was present at the moment of signing.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a method and system for carrying out secure signing of a person on the data packet(s), which verify that the person whose personalized biometric sample is attached to the data packet actually signed the data packet(s).

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide a method and system for carrying out secure signing of a person on the data packet(s), that allow to add several signatures to a document.

Summary of the Invention

- a) sampling one or more biometric sample(s) of the person and converting the biometric sample(s) to a digital form;
- b) producing a first digital seal from the combination of the digital data packet(s) and the biometric sample(s), or from two or more digital seals derived from the digital data packet(s) and the biometric sample(s);
- c) sending the digital data packet(s) and the biometric sample(s) and the digital seal to the recipient;
- d) producing a second digital seal from the combination(s) of received digital data packet(s) and the received biometric sample(s);
- e) comparing the first and the second seals; and

The method may further comprise:

- a) providing a system for sampling biometric samples and storing the same in digital form;
- b) providing means for encrypting data at the sender's location;
- c) providing means for decrypting data at the recipient's location;
- d) sampling one or more biometric sample(s) and converting the biometric sample(s) to digital form;
- e) producing a first digital seal from the digital data packet(s) and the biometric sample(s);
- f) encrypting the digital data packet(s), the biometric sample(s) and the first digital seal or the two or more digital seals by the encryption means;
- g) sending the encrypted data to the recipient;
- h) decrypting the encrypted data by the recipient;
- i) producing a second digital seal from the received digital data packet(s) and the received biometric sample(s);
- j) comparing the first and the second seals; and

Optionally, the encryption/decryption is carried out by using private and/or public keys.

- a) providing a computerized server for managing the signing process,
the server being connected to a network via network connection means;
- b) providing a database system for storing signed data packet(s), unsigned data packet(s), a list of authorized users, the users' personal details and biometric templates, the database system accessible by the server;
- c) providing one or more client terminal(s) for managing the signing process at the user's location, the terminal(s) being coupled with means for carrying out biometric samples, the terminals(s) being connected to the network via network connection means;
- d) providing a list of users authorized for carrying out a digital signature, the users list, the users' personal details and their template(s) being stored in the database system;

- At the server's location:**

- At the client's location:**

- j) upon receiving a digital ID from the server, producing a digital package comprised of the digital ID, the personal information and the template and/or the image of a sample of the user;
- k) adding a digital seal of the digital package to the digital package;
- l) sending the digital package to the server;
- m) identifying the user by the personal details comprised in the digital package;
- n) authenticating the user's signature by comparing the received template with the template of the user which is stored in the database;
- o) producing a second digital seal of the received digital package; and
- p) upon positive results in the verification and the authentication and the comparison, approving the authentication of the digital

The method may further comprise the steps of:

- Optionally, the digital ID is obtained randomly.

Optionally, the encryption-decryption is symmetric or asymmetric.

Optionally, the data is sent via the Internet and/or via the Intranet and/or via a WAN (Wide Area Network) and/or via a LAN (Local Area Network) and/or via a WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) and/or via the telephone network and/or by FTP (File Transfer Protocol) and/or by e-mail.

In another aspect, the invention is directed to a system for carrying out secure digital signature on one or more digital data packet(s) comprising:

- a computerized server for managing the signing process, the server being connected to a network via network connection means;
- a database system for storing signed data packets, unsigned data packets, a list of authorized users, the users' personal details and biometric templates, the database system accessible by the server;
- one or more client terminal(s) for managing the signing process at the user's location, the terminal(s) being coupled with means for carrying out biometric samples, and connected to the network via network connection means;
- a software component at the client's terminal for producing a template of a biometric sample; and
- a software component for comparing digital seals.

The system may further comprises means for encrypting and decrypting of data, the means residing on the server and the client(s) terminal(s).

Optionally, the client's terminal is a computer or a set-top box or a mobile phone.

The above and other characteristics and advantages of the invention will be better understood through the following illustrative and non-limitative detailed description of preferred embodiments thereof, with reference to the appended drawings, wherein:

- Fig. 1 schematically illustrates a digital signature algorithm, according to the prior art;
- Fig. 2 schematically illustrates the process for producing a digest from a biometric sample;
- Fig. 3 schematically illustrates a digital signature, which involves biometric sample algorithm, according to a preferred embodiment of the invention;
- Fig. 4 schematically illustrates a digital signature, which involves biometric sample algorithm and encryption, according to a preferred embodiment of the invention;
- Fig. 5 schematically illustrates a digital signature process, according to a preferred embodiment of the invention; and

- ### **Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiments**

The sender runs the digital document 10 through a hash function 20. As a result of this function, a digital seal 30 is produced. The digital seal is digital data, such as a number, a vector, a string, etc.

The encrypted data 50 is sent to the recipient via a network 60, such as the Internet. In order to carry out delivery, the encrypted data 50 may be sent via FTP service, e-mail, etc.

Then, the recipient runs the received document through the same hash function 20, and as a result of this function, a seal 31 is produced.

Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the process may be implemented on a plurality of documents. Hence, icon 10 represents one or more digital documents. Moreover, the documents may comprise any data, such as file(s), database(s), image(s), multimedia representation(s), and so forth.

Biometrics are automated methods of recognizing a person based on a physiological or behavioral characteristic. According to the prior art, biometric samples are presented as digests (Templates) upon which two biometric samples may be compared. Hence, the authentication of a person can be carried out by comparing two digests.

Fingerprint verification

Potentially capable of good accuracy (low instances of false acceptance) fingerprint devices can also suffer from usage errors among insufficiently disciplined users (higher instances of false rejection) such as might be the case with large user bases. One must also consider the transducer / user interface and how this would be affected by large scale usage in a variety of environments. Fingerprint verification may be a good choice for in-house systems wherein adequate explanation and training can be provided to users and the system is operated within a controlled environment. It is not

surprising that the workstation access application area seems to be based almost exclusively around fingerprints, due to the relatively low cost, small size (easily integrated into keyboards) and ease of integration.

Fig. 2 schematically illustrates the process for producing a digest from a biometric sample.

The fingerprint 81 is grabbed by a DFR-based device (DFR - Digital Fingerprint Reader). As a result, the fingerprint is converted to a digital image. This image is used as input for the software component 82, which executes an algorithm. As a result, a digital digest is produced 80. The digital digest, hereinafter called "Template", is a group of digital numbers upon which two biometric samples may be compared.

Fig. 3 schematically illustrates a digital signature, which involves biometric sample algorithm, according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. The digital documents 10 and the biometric sample 80 are passed through a hash function 20. As a result, the seal 30 is produced. The icon 80 represents the image and/or the template of the biometric sample. If the image was the data sent, said data must be processed at the recipient's location in order to receive its template, and to be compared with an authentic template stored at the recipient's location.

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At the next step, as illustrated in box 90, the sent digital seal 30 is compared with the produced digital seal 31. If the compared digital seals are identical, then the conclusion is that the digital signature on the attached digital documents is verified.

The digital documents 10 and/or the biometric sample 80 and/or the digital seal 30 are encrypted, as illustrated in box 40. Then, the encrypted data 50 along with the unencrypted data is sent to the recipient, as illustrated in icon 60.

At the recipient's location, the encrypted data 50 is decrypted, as illustrated in box 70. Then, hash function 20 is processed on the same documents as in the sender's location, and as a result, a digital seal 31 is produced.

The encryption has two aims: to preserve the privacy of the documents 10, and to add an additional obstacle to the potential "hacker". Therefore, encryption of the digital seal and the template are not mandatory.

A server 100 is involved in the signing process. The server contains a list of authorized users and their personal details. The details may include the template of their biometric sample. The server also contains a list of documents to be signed and/or a software component upon which the user defines the contents of the document to be signed.

- Step 1 - defining the content of the document(s) to be signed;
- Step 2 - identification of the user. The details of the user are sent to the server along with the signed document(s); and

- Step 3 - producing an endorsement of the signed document, and sending it to the user. This step is optional.

The first step

At this step the content of the document(s) to be signed is defined. This step can be carried out by a dialogue between the server and the user, by completing a form etc, depending on the application. For instance, if the application deals with the ordering of goods from a virtual store, then the order may be filled out by a Web page, which contains a list of the goods. Of course, the Web page may also calculate the cost of the goods. If the signed document is a contract, then the contract may reside at the server's storage device or be composed at the users' location, and subsequently sent to the server.

The second step

At this step, which is carried out at the user's location, the system samples a biometric sample of the user. The system may ask the user to enter some additional details such as his name, a password known only to the user, etc. The biometric sample 90, the user's details 110 and the document(s) to be signed, 10, are processed by a hash function, encrypted and then sent to the server. The server authenticates the identity of the user, compares the received document(s) with the authentic document(s) stored at the server's

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The third step

Fig. 6 schematically illustrates a digital signature process, according to another preferred embodiment of the invention. In order to add another security level, a randomized ID number (marked as 130) is added to the transferred data. This number is generated at the server's location upon receiving a request for carrying out a digital signature. Since the client does not have any information about the random number, the fact that the random number is attached to the sent data adds a further level of security to the method. Moreover, the random number, or a function of it, may be used as the ID of the transaction, by which the transaction can be identified in the future.

- a computerized server for managing the signing process, which is connected to a network via network connection means;
- a database system for storing signed data packets, unsigned data packets, a list of authorized users, the users' personal details and biometric templates. The database system should be accessible by the server;
- one or more client terminal(s) for managing the signing process at the user's location. The terminal(s) should be coupled with means for carrying out biometric samples, and connected to the network via network connection means;
- a software component at the client's terminal for producing a template of a biometric sample; and
- a software component for comparing digital seals.

The recipient should be coupled with interface means for browsing the Internet, such as a computer, a set-top box (a device that enables a television set to become a user interface to the Internet) or a

The above examples and description have of course been provided only for the purpose of illustration, and are not intended to limit the invention in any way. As will be appreciated by the skilled person, the invention can be carried out in a great variety of ways, employing more than one technique from those described above, all without exceeding the scope of the invention.